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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0007
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 3843
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3511
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 9082
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU PRIORITY 0269
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1065
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 000223

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DEPT FOR SA/INS, PRM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/23/2016

TAGS: [PREF](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: 41 TIBETANS ARRESTED AND RELEASED

REF: KATHMANDU 172

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Tibetans Returning from Teaching in India Briefly Detained

¶1. (SBU) On January 22, Nepali police arrested forty-one Tibetans at Thankot, the main entry point for the Kathmandu valley. (Note: This checkpoint was the site of a high profile Maoist attack on January 14. Reftel. End note.) The group of Tibetans were returning to Kathmandu, en route to Tibet, after attending the Dalai Lama's Kalachakra ceremony in India. The Nepal office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) told us that the police handed the group over to the Department of Immigration (DOI), who interviewed the members of the group, and determined that all forty-one were Chinese passport holders with valid Nepalese visas. According to Tibetan Reception Center (TRC) staff, DOI had released all members of the group.

Many Tibetans Transiting Nepal to Tibet

¶2. (SBU) UNHCR explained to Emboff that the Dalai Lama's Kalachakra ceremony ended one week ago, and this group was among the thousands of Tibetans now returning to Tibet. UNHCR noted that a reported 100,000 people, including an estimated 8,000 or more Tibetans from Tibet, attended the Kalachakra. Many Tibetans were able to obtain passports and visas for Nepal, but were afraid of returning to China with Indian stamps in their passports. They therefore left their passports in Nepal while traveling illegally to India, picking up the passports in Kathmandu before returning to China - with no evidence in the passports of having visited India.

Comment

¶3. (C) With Nepal's security forces on high alert, we may well see more arrests like these in coming days, as Tibetans try to return via Kathmandu to collect their travel documents for returning to Tibet. This leaves them vulnerable to arrest while traveling from the Indian border to Kathmandu. Many others who traveled without passports (some processed as new arrivals at TRC with UNHCR assistance) may also now

attempt to return to Tibet secretly, and may face problems at various points in Nepal. TRC staff are on the alert and UNHCR has explained they will intervene should persons of concern face detention or deportation.

MORIARTY